



**UNITED STATES COMMISSION
FOR THE PRESERVATION OF AMERICA'S HERITAGE ABROAD**

NEWS RELEASE

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③ **U.S. and Bulgaria Agree to Preserve Cultural Property**

Today, the governments of the United States and Bulgaria entered into an agreement regarding the preservation of cultural properties -- places of worship, historic sites, monuments, cemeteries, and cultural archives.

The agreement was signed in Washington, D.C. by the chairman of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, Warren L. Miller, and Bulgaria's ambassador to the U.S., Elena Poptodorova.

The agreement pledges the countries to –

- **take steps to help protect and preserve properties that are important to the cultural heritage of their citizens;**
- **cooperate in identifying and preserving such properties;**
- **ensure equal treatment of all cultural groups in property preservation and access policies; and**
- **establish a Joint Cultural Heritage Commission to oversee the efforts.**

The Commission is expected to focus on the cultural property of minority groups in Bulgaria that had been the victims of persecution in the past.

Upon signing the Agreement, both Chairman Miller and Ambassador Poptodorova stressed its significance. They discussed how this Agreement would strengthen the cooperation between Bulgaria and the United States on matters of cultural and historic heritage.

(MORE)

Cultural Property Agreement Add One

It was noted that the U.S. Commission is beginning a comprehensive inventory of cultural properties of minority groups in Bulgaria. It was also disclosed that the Commission has established a lecture series and scholarships at the American University in Bulgaria and that it is restoring the synagogue in Plovdiv, Bulgaria with private donations. The lectures will discuss American contributions to the Balkan nation.

Today's agreement is the tenth such agreement to be entered into between the U.S. and countries in eastern and central Europe. The U.S. is seeking agreements with 23 countries in the region.

The U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad is charged by law with identifying sites in the region that are associated with the heritage of U.S. citizens and obtaining assurances from the region's governments that the properties will be preserved. It also assists privately-funded site restoration. Its agreements are negotiated in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Photographs of the signing are available from the Commission office upon request.